

# USDA Rural Development -- Minnesota COMMUNITY & CO-OP DEVELOPMENT NEWS

Fall 2002

## Oslo & Mayor Ole Are In Gear!

USDA Rural Development helped Oslo, MN residents envision their future at a public meeting in October. The small town known for fighting floods is now fighting a trend far too common to many communities -- its youth are leaving, residents are growing older, and businesses are closing. However, its location 20 miles north of Grand Forks and south of Winnipeg may well position it for the future. By the end of the visioning session, the town's strengths and opportunities were identified along with potential work groups. Here's an update ...

Subject: Another Town Meeting  
Date: Fri, 8 Nov 2002  
09:54:04 -0600  
From: "oslo"  
[oslo@wiktel.com](mailto:oslo@wiktel.com)  
To:  
[Kathy.Coyle@mn.usda.gov](mailto:Kathy.Coyle@mn.usda.gov)



Dear Kathy,

On October 23rd we had a town meeting to inform concerned citizens about the priorities that you helped us identify and begin working on. I've attached a copy of the Notice that went out to churches, hand delivered to residents and business owners. We had a wonderful turn-out! At least 50 people were here, and also some of our younger citizens. We formed a youth group, with adult leaders and youth leaders. They have painted the inside of the warming house, and had a meeting already. A block nurse program committee was formed and has met. The business incentives group is meeting this month, Centennial group formed and will start working on plans, had lots of ideas from the group. It was so great. Everyone was fired-up!!!! Thanks for your help in getting us going, and keeping us going! Will keep you informed.

Jan Nice, Oslo City Clerk

## Life in the Vast Lane?

Willmar, Kandiyohi County, and MN Dept. of Agriculture recently sponsored a day-long session entitled "Investing in MN Agriculture." Participants learned about opportunities in biodiesel and food processing, future livestock regulations, research on the financial contribution livestock operations pump into a community and state, and the need to enhance global agricultural markets. The MN Legislature may consider a "livestock friendly" bill in 2003 that will position dairy producers in southwestern MN to grow their herds and market their milk to the Davisco cheese plant in South Dakota. Contact RD's Kathy Coyle for more information on conference highlights, including a promotional piece that advertises Kandiyohi Co. as "life in the vast lane" versus the Twin Cities as "life in the fast lane" with bumper-to-bumper traffic congestion.

## Upcoming events

January 15-16

Market Place of Ideas, Grand Forks, ND Alerus Center, Attend workshops on a variety of issues, including the Inventor's Congress ([www.NDInventors.com](http://www.NDInventors.com)). It is hosted by the ND Ag Commissioner but sponsored by many, including USDA Rural Development. Everyone's welcome!

See: [www.marketplaceofideas.com](http://www.marketplaceofideas.com)

January 23-25

MN Grazing & Organic Conference, St. Cloud, MN  
St. Cloud Civic Center

D. Gunnink [dgunnink@prairie.lakes.com](mailto:dgunnink@prairie.lakes.com) 507-2375162

March 13-14

Burdick Center for Cooperatives Executive Training for Co-op Leaders, Alexandria, MN.

Contact: Dr. Bill Nelson [Bill.Nelson@ndsu.nodak.edu](mailto:Bill.Nelson@ndsu.nodak.edu)  
North Dakota State University 701-231-1016

April 28 -- Alerus Center, Grand Forks, ND

May 7 -- Concordia College, Moorhead, MN

Marketplace of Ideas for Kids -- MN kids are welcome, too!

August 3-5

MN Rural Summit, Mankato, MN

see: [www.mnruralpartners.org](http://www.mnruralpartners.org)

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## Outreach to Enhance Native Budgeting

First National Development Institute and the Fannie Mae Foundation have developed financial skills curriculum, Building Native Communities: Financial Skills for Families. It was designed to help Native people take control of their financial future.

First Nations, Fannie Mae Foundation and other partners will train regional instructors called "Super Trainers." Rural Development's Pam Wiltsey will be a super trainer, in Minnesota. These super trainers will deliver "train the trainer" courses to local trainers and in turn, the local trainers, who are tribal housing folks, will offer the course to tribal members. Thirty-three "train the trainer" sessions have already been completed nationwide, reaching 30 tribal communities and almost 500 instructors. The goal is to reach over 10,000 tribal members. Wiltsey has been invited by the Leech Lake Tribal College to train a group of tribal housing personnel from the Leech Lake, White Earth and Red Lake Nations in January 2003. Pam will partner with the National American Indian Housing Council in offering this workshop.

## Improving Your Community

Minnesota Planning has released a 200 plus page guide "Tools and Techniques for Local Planning." Access it online:

[www.nplan.state.mn.us/pdf/2002/UnderConstruction.pdf](http://www.nplan.state.mn.us/pdf/2002/UnderConstruction.pdf)

## Wadena

### Sustainable into the Future?

Joe Folsom, Community & Co-op Development Program Director instructed residents of Wadena and the region, how to form a co-op at a November workshop. An initiative is Underway to explore a variety of ideas in hopes of creating a sustainable community in the small, west-central MN town. Possibilities include an ag-based industrial park with an ethanol plant to fuel other value-added businesses; a greenhouse enhanced with carbon dioxide (a by-product of ethanol production); livestock fed with DDGs (another byproduct from an ethanol plant), dairy production, and possible enhancements to the existing Buckwheat Growers' mill and shipping facility. Contact [deebilek@wcta.net](mailto:deebilek@wcta.net) for more on sustainable opportunities. Participants also learned how to create biodiesel from MN crops, especially soybeans. That report is available to Minnesotans through AURI -- Agriculture Utilization Research Institute. See: [www.auri.org](http://www.auri.org) or write: [mshparby@auri.org](mailto:mshparby@auri.org)

Ken Gust explains his sustainable vision.



### Moving up the Food Chain!

A number of MN co-ops and LLCs have been selected to receive value-added grants from USDA Rural Development. They include: American Crystal Sugar, MG Grass Seed, Midwest Investorys, Earthwise Processors, Harvest Land, Cenex Harvest States, SoyMor, Generation II Ethanol, St. Paul Growers Assn., and Blue Mound Soy. Others serving MN. farmers include: FarmConnect (its soy plant is in Iowa) and the National Bison Assn. Value-added development grants range up to a half million dollars to help producers grow their businesses through financial and legal planning and marketing. More grants are anticipated in 2003. See: [www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm](http://www.rurdev.usda.gov/rbs/coops/vadg.htm) or contact: [robbyn.holdorf@mn.usda.gov](mailto:robbyn.holdorf@mn.usda.gov)



## RD Specialist Honored

Pam Wiltsey has been adopted into the Kathy Headbird family, who are Leech Lake band members in northern Minnesota. The name, "Bene Siikwe," meaning "Thunderbird Woman" was given to Pam during a pipe ceremony August 17, 2002. A song in her honor was written and sung by Kathy. A traditional meal followed with family in attendance.

"It is a great honor to become part of Kathy's family, and I am very proud of my new name," Wiltsey remarked.

"I will carry it with dignity and honor."

Pam is an enrolled member of the Cherokee Nation and Osage Tribe. The Am. Indian Community Development Specialist lives near Crosslake with her husband, Joe. He is also a longtime USDA employee, the training coordinator for the Natural Resource Conservation Service.

### RISKY BEHAVIOR

Community leaders in Detroit Lakes are tackling the issue of underage drinking and drug use. RD's Kathy Coyle is teaming-up with MN Extension, United Way, clergy, law enforcement, education leaders, county commissioners, city council officials, concerned parents, and others in hopes of making a difference following the deaths of two local teenagers.



Bizpathways is up and running! This web site, coordinated by Minnesota Rural Partners, has a wealth of information including: how to create a business plan, what resources are available to help you launch your idea, and much more. See: [bizpathways.org](http://bizpathways.org) And don't be afraid to share it with others! Maybe there is a young person in your life who could be putting his or her dreams into reality with a little help from you and the Internet. USDA RD is a proud member of Minnesota Rural Partners where many organizations come together to share their talents.

### Minnesota Community & Co-op Development

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